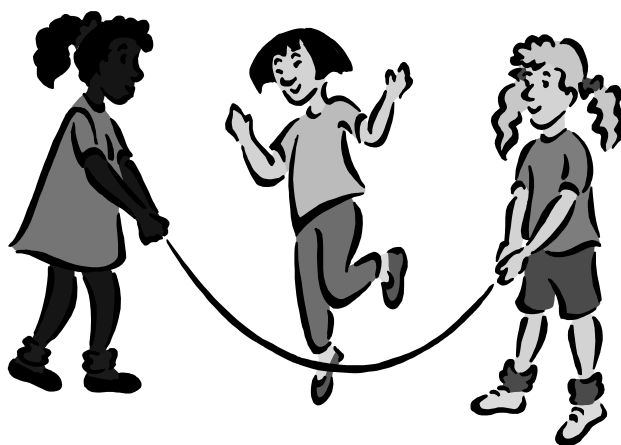


# 101 Ways to Keep Kids Busy This Summer



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Resource Center  
State of California  
Alcohol and Drug Programs  
1700 K Street  
First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

(800) 879-2772 (California Only)  
(916) 327-3728  
FAX: (916) 323-1270  
TTY: (916) 445-1942  
Internet: <http://www.adp.ca.gov>  
E-Mail: [ResourceCenter@adp.state.ca.us](mailto:ResourceCenter@adp.state.ca.us)

It's almost time for school summer vacation -- do you know what your kids will be doing? If not, there is still time to plan. Children and adolescents who are involved in constructive, adult-supervised activities outside of school are less likely to use drugs. **Of all the reasons young people try drugs, boredom is the easiest to fix.**

There is a direct connection between unsupervised time and drug use, as well as other high-risk and antisocial behavior. A strong relationship exists between lack of adult-supervised "free" time and susceptibility to substance abuse. Young people who abuse drugs usually report a lack of extracurricular activities, and more time spent with their friends than with their families.

When parents and communities ensure that children and adolescents are involved in worthwhile activities, the better chance there is to prevent problem behavior.

A child or teen's demand for independence is not a signal to become less involved in planning their activities. Young people always need parental guidance in planning their time. Activities need not be elaborate or expensive, but should be interesting, provide structure and have adult supervision.

**Here are some suggestions...**

### *Sports/Games/Activities*

- ◆ Encourage them to play on a baseball or softball team
- ◆ Have them join a soccer team
- ◆ Make one day a week "Adventure Day" and explore someplace you haven't been
- ◆ Register them for a scuba class
- ◆ Arrange for a game of "Capture the Flag"
- ◆ Organize a water balloon fight
- ◆ Enroll them in a street hockey league
- ◆ Coordinate a scavenger hunt
- ◆ Take them to the driving range to hit golf balls and improve their swing
- ◆ Install a basketball hoop in your driveway, and then play with them
- ◆ Participate in nature walks together
- ◆ Visit state parks and take guided hikes
- ◆ Get season passes to the local minor league baseball team
- ◆ Take them camping, even if it is only in the backyard
- ◆ Establish an annual family mini-golf tournament
- ◆ Get a season pass to a nearby amusement park
- ◆ Help them build a soap-box car and then hold a derby
- ◆ Sign them up to be officials in kiddie sports leagues
- ◆ Organize a neighborhood Olympics
- ◆ Play flashlight tag on a warm night

- ◆ Build a skateboard park for kids
- ◆ Have them join the swim team
- ◆ Urge them to take lifeguard training
- ◆ Take them horseback riding
- ◆ Hold a monthly swimming and pizza day
- ◆ Take them bowling
- ◆ Send them to cheerleading camp
- ◆ Teach them to fish
- ◆ Schedule family game nights
- ◆ Have kids take turns picking videos for a family "movie night" at home.
- ◆ Go birdwatching
- ◆ Go to a fish store to see different varieties
- ◆ Have them write and put on a play
- ◆ Make kids responsible for grooming family pets
- ◆ Have the kids plan dinner menus
- ◆ Attend State and County fairs

### *Volunteerism*

- ◆ Enroll them in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
- ◆ Clean Up the Neighborhood
- ◆ Urge them to help an older neighbor by taking out trash, grocery shopping, etc
- ◆ Urge them to set-up or reorganize the library at your local place of worship
- ◆ Volunteer with them at a soup kitchen
- ◆ Encourage them to volunteer at a hospital
- ◆ Encourage them to read to patients at a local nursing home
- ◆ Help them to set up a recycling program in your neighborhood
- ◆ Help them coordinate a "School Clean-Up"
- ◆ Paint old school buildings together
- ◆ Have them care for animals at the local SPCA
- ◆ Sign up the family to build houses with Habitat for Humanity
- ◆ Encourage them to write a letter to their Member of Congress

### *Entrepreneurship*

- ◆ Have them volunteer their babysitting services to friends and relatives
- ◆ Encourage them to become the neighborhood dog walker
- ◆ Employ them around the house -- give them fix-it or clean up projects
- ◆ Help them start a neighborhood newspaper - reporting on the latest!
- ◆ Give them weekly errands like shopping or getting the mail

- ♦ Have them hold a car wash for the neighborhood
- ♦ Set up a lemonade stand
- ♦ Encourage them to hold a "fun fair" for younger kids
- ♦ Give them a list of daily chores
- ♦ Hold a multi-family garage sale
- ♦ If possible, bring them to your office a few days a week to help out
- ♦ Have them research a major family purchase
- ♦ Help them start a pet sitting service while people are on vacation
- ♦ Help them start a business teaching older people how to use the computer

### *Education/Classes*

- ♦ Teach them astronomy and star gaze together
- ♦ Inspire them to design their dream house
- ♦ Send them to church sponsored activities
- ♦ Give them space for a garden and teach them to grow vegetables or flowers
- ♦ Enroll them in a CPR training class
- ♦ Check out books from the library each week
- ♦ Help them start a global e-mail club
- ♦ Take them to zoos and museums
- ♦ Teach them to identify plants and trees in the area
- ♦ Have them learn to play a musical instrument
- ♦ Urge them to conduct a family history search on the Internet or at the library
- ♦ Tell them to do a land survey of the 10-square blocks around your house
- ♦ Start a book club with your kids
- ♦ Have them read an article in the "opinion" section of the newspaper and ask their views
- ♦ Conduct science experiments
- ♦ Take a cooking class together
- ♦ Encourage them to "play" the stock market and monitor their investments
- ♦ Have them learn about the customs of other cultures

### *Crafts*

- ♦ Start a neighborhood art group
- ♦ Give them the camcorder, and let them make their own home movie
- ♦ Teach them to do bark rubbings
- ♦ Build, and maintain, a birdfeeder
- ♦ Give them the supplies to create their own personalized stationery
- ♦ Set up a craft room for tie-dyeing tee shirts
- ♦ Show them how to create their own postcards
- ♦ Encourage them to write a song, and then let them record it
- ♦ Build a treehouse together
- ♦ Have them decorate pots and plant seedlings as gifts for the elderly

- ♦ Have them take pictures of their favorite summer moments and make a scrap book
- ♦ Teach them to knit or crochet

### ***Other Ideas...***

- ♦ Send them to their grandparents for a change of scenery
- ♦ Take them strawberry picking at a local farm and then feast on the fruit
- ♦ Make homemade ice cream together
- ♦ Organize a pet show
- ♦ Coordinate a weekly Family Film Festival
- ♦ Organize a neighborhood block party
- ♦ Create, and tend to, an ant farm together
- ♦ Create an "award" for summer achievements